

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressmen Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) and Bobby Scott (D-VA), Ranking Member on the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, introduced H.R. 2656, The Public Safety Enhancement Act of 2013. This bipartisan legislation uses risk assessment tools to reduce recidivism, lower the crime rate, and reduce the amount of money spent on the federal prison system.

Chaffetz and Scott are joined as original cosponsors by the following members: John Conyers (D-MI), Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, Howard Coble (R-NC), Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), Tom Marino (R-PA), and Adam Schiff (D-CA).

"It's no longer enough to be tough on crime. We have to be smart on crime as well," said Chaffetz. "We never want to see these individuals in federal prison again. The ultimate goal of this legislation is to reduce recidivism by incentivizing inmates to participate in activities and programs that help them prepare to integrate back into society. "

"I am pleased to join Congressman Chaffetz and my other colleagues in this effort to bring more efficiencies, productivity, effectiveness and fairness to the federal prison and post release supervision systems through evidenced-based strategies," said Scott. "Ultimately, we will all benefit from the effort as we will all be less likely to be victims of crime as a result of the reduced recidivism this approach has been shown time and again to produce at the state level. "

H.R. 2656 would implement a post-sentencing dynamic risk assessment system to identify an inmate's risk of recidivism. Then, using evidence-based practices developed by states, effective recidivism reduction programs are identified and utilized. The bill would then provide incentives for inmates to participate in those programs.

Ultimately, inmates could earn credits toward an alternative custody arrangement – such as a halfway house or home confinement – at the end of their term. Such arrangements reduce the cost of housing an inmate in the federal prison system.

"By using risk assessments to divide inmates into high, moderate or low risk categories, we can identify those most likely to succeed in an alternative custody arrangement," said Chaffetz. "And as a byproduct, this proposal has the very appealing side effect of reducing long-term prison costs."

The program will be phased in over a five year period. The savings will be reinvested into further expansions of proven recidivism reduction programs during this time. After that, it is anticipated that the savings can be used either for other Justice Department priorities such as FBI agents, US Attorney offices etc., or the savings can be used to help reduce the deficit.

Similar programs have found success on a state level in several states including Texas,

Oklahoma, Ohio, and North Carolina.

#### Post-Sentencing Risk Assessment System

- The Attorney General is directed to consult with appropriate federal agencies and stakeholders to design, develop, implement, and regularly upgrade an actuarial Post Sentencing Risk Assessment System which shall include one or more comprehensive risk and needs assessment tools, which shall be peer-reviewed and validated, and periodically re-validated, on the federal prison population for the specific purposes of this Act.
  - Prisoners will be divided into high, moderate, or low risks of recidivism.
  - Prisoners will be periodically re-evaluated and have the opportunity to progress to low risk of recidivism. Prisoners who misbehave can move the other way – i.e. from low to moderate risk of recidivism.
  - Bureau of Prisons shall incentivize prisoners to reduce their individual risk of recidivism by participating in and completing recidivism reduction programs.
  - Prisoners who have committed more serious crimes such as child abuse, terrorism, and violent felonies, are not eligible for the program.
  - If a prisoner is successfully participating in and/or completing programs, holding a prison job, participating in educational courses, participating in faith-based services and courses, or delivering programs or faith-based services and courses to other prisoners, the prisoner can earn:
    - Low risk – 30 days time credits per month
    - Moderate risk – 15 days time credits per month
    - High risk – 8 days time credits per month
- Low risk prisoners will be eligible for consideration for alternative custody such as halfway houses, home confinement, ankle bracelets, etc.
  - This is not automatic – it must be reviewed and approved by the prison warden, the chief probation officer in the relevant federal district, and a judge in the relevant federal district.
  - This is not a reduction in sentence – prisoners are not being released and nothing in this Act affects Truth in Sentencing requirements that prisoners complete at least 85% of their sentence.

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